

NEWS RELEASE/PUBLIC NOTICE

COVID-19 outbreak extended to NHH's 1A Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit— Temporary pause on visiting and volunteers extended to all affected units

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Friday, August 30, 2024—With the number of confirmed COVID-19 infections increasing at Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH), an outbreak has now been declared on the hospital's Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit (1A) in addition to the ongoing outbreak in the Restorative Care Unit (1B) first identified on Tuesday, August 27.

In light of the rising presence of COVID-19 both inside the hospital and in the community at large, visitor and volunteer restrictions are being extended, effective immediately, to the Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit (1A) in addition to the existing pause implemented earlier in the week on Restorative Care (1B).

Visiting continues as usual outside the Inpatient Rehabilitation and Restorative Care units unless patients are in isolation for a COVID-19 infection or exposure. Limited exceptions are made for COVID-19 positive patients on discussion with Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) staff and the care team including, for example, those at imminent end-of-life.

The following is a summary of the infection prevention and control measures in place at NHH to minimize risk and conclude the outbreak as soon as possible:

- **Visiting restrictions and new admissions** – Regular visiting is temporarily paused to the Inpatient Rehabilitation and Restorative Care units. New admissions to the unit will be assessed on a day-by-day basis.
- **Update to dining room service** – Dining room service has been replaced with in room service on both the Inpatient Rehabilitation and Restorative Care units as a precaution.
- **Daily self-screening by staff for COVID-19 symptoms** – All individuals entering the hospital for work must pre-screen for symptoms and refrain from entering the building or Community Mental Health offices in the event symptoms develop pending discussion with IPAC.
- **Mandatory use of appropriate PPE in affected area** – All staff, physicians, midwives, and essential caregivers/visitors are expected to pay strict attention to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements throughout the hospital, including increased requirements within the Inpatient Rehabilitation and Restorative Care units for the duration of the outbreak.
- **Monitoring of patients and staff considered “high risk contacts”** – Any patients who have been identified as having a high risk of exposure have been relocated, tested, and are being cared for with appropriate precautions;

similarly, staff at risk of an exposure will also be asked to monitor and supported with testing as required.

- **Mandatory vaccination of staff** – All staff and physicians are required to be up to date with their vaccines; booster vaccines continue to be available to further reduce the risk of infection and spread.
- **Strict adherence to thorough hand hygiene practices** – Strict adherence to thorough hand hygiene will continue to be reinforced.
- **Enhanced environmental cleaning** – Enhanced cleaning, with a focus on high touch surfaces and common spaces has been implemented.
- **Proactive communication** – Public notices are continually updated across NHH's communication channels, including doorways within/leading to the hospital, to promote awareness of the presence of COVID-19 and the importance of vigilance with PPE.

Masking remains a shared responsibility to mitigate spread

While masking is currently required within the affected units, it remains optional elsewhere in the hospital unless noted. With COVID cases on the rise in the broader community, residents are reminded to monitor for any symptoms prior to visiting and refrain from visiting where symptoms are present. Masks continue to be readily available at all hospital entrances.

Visiting reminders

Visitors who have recently developed COVID-19 are not permitted to visit patients for 10 full days from the date of symptom onset or from testing positive (whichever date is earliest).

For details on NHH's [Visiting Guidelines](#) and expectations, including answers to other [Frequently Asked Questions](#), please see our website. Updates on NHH's COVID-19 outbreak status will continue to be communicated through the hospital's website and related social media channels.

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About Northumberland Hills Hospital – Located approximately 100 kilometres east of Toronto, NHH delivers a broad range of acute, post-acute, outpatient and diagnostic services. Acute services include emergency and intensive care, medical/surgical care, obstetrical care and palliative care. Post-acute specialty services (PASS) include restorative care and rehabilitation. Mental health care, cancer and supportive care, dialysis and other ambulatory care clinics are offered on an outpatient basis through partnerships with regional centres and nearby specialists. NHH offers a full range of diagnostic services, including magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), computed tomography (CT) and mammography. The hospital serves the catchment area of west Northumberland County. A mixed urban and rural population of approximately 67,000 residents, west Northumberland comprises the Town of Cobourg, the Municipality of Port Hope, Alderville First Nation and the townships of Hamilton, Cramahe and Alnwick/Haldimand. NHH employs more than

850 people and relies on the additional support provided by physicians, midwives and volunteers. NHH is an active member of Ontario Health (East)—formerly the Central East Local Health Integration Network—and the Ontario Health Team of Northumberland. For more information, please visit nhh.ca or follow us on Facebook [@northumberlandhillshosp](https://www.facebook.com/northumberlandhillshosp), X/Twitter [@NorHillsHosp](https://twitter.com/NorHillsHosp), and LinkedIn [Northumberland Hills Hospital](https://www.linkedin.com/company/northumberland-hills-hospital).

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